

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Original) A method for the vitrification of human oocytes, which comprises:
(a) placing human oocytes on a transfer instrument; and
(b) placing the transfer instrument and the human oocytes directly into a slushed nitrogen (N₂ slush), wherein the human oocytes are directly exposed to the N₂ slush thereby undergoing vitrification, and wherein the human oocytes are able to live for a period of time after the human oocytes are devitrified.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the transfer instrument is a gold grid.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step (a) further comprises treating the human oocytes with a cryoprotectant prior to vitrification.

4. (Currently Amended) Human oocytes which has undergone vitrification produced by the method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3.~~

5. (Original) A method for the vitrification and devitrification of human oocytes, which comprises:
(a) placing human oocytes on a transfer instrument;
(b) placing the transfer instrument and the human oocytes directly into N₂ slush, wherein the human oocytes are directly exposed to the N₂ slush thereby undergoing vitrification, and wherein the human oocytes are able to live for a period of time after the human oocytes are devitrified; and
(c) devitrifying the human oocytes which have undergone vitrification.

6. (Original) A method for the vitrification and storage of human oocytes, which comprises:
(a) placing human oocytes on a transfer instrument;

(b) placing the transfer instrument and the human oocytes directly into N₂ slush, wherein the human oocytes are directly exposed to the N₂ slush thereby undergoing vitrification, and wherein the human oocytes are able to live for a period of time after the human oocytes are devitrified;

(c) transferring the human oocytes which have undergone vitrification into a storage container, the storage container containing a freezing material; and

(d) storing the storage container containing the human oocytes which have undergone vitrification until the human oocytes are ready to devitrified.

7. (New) Human oocytes which has undergone vitrification produced by the method according to claim 2.

8. (New) Human oocytes which has undergone vitrification produced by the method according to claim 3.